

## **Why is exercise good for my heart?**

Exercise makes your heart stronger, helping it pump more blood with each heart beat. The blood then delivers more oxygen to your body. Exercise can also lower blood pressure, reduce your risk of heart disease and reduce levels of LDL ("bad" cholesterol), which clogs the arteries and can cause a heart attack. At the same time, exercise can raise levels of HDL ("good" cholesterol), which helps protect against heart disease.

Exercise is the best way to lose weight. Burning calories and working off the fat will help you look and feel better. Regular exercise helps you burn calories faster, even when you're sitting still.

## **What's the best type of exercise for my heart?**

Aerobic exercise causes you to breathe more deeply and makes your heart work harder to pump blood. Aerobic exercise raises your heart rate (which also burns calories). Examples of aerobic exercise include walking, jogging, running, swimming, and bicycling.

## **How much exercise do I need?**

You should progress slowly, and try to move every day. Your doctor may make specific recommendations based on your health. For example, if you haven't exercised for a while it may be best to start with a couple of minutes of exercise and work up to a half-hour. One sign that you may be overdoing it is if you can't carry on a conversation while you exercise. Alternating exercise days with rest days helps to prevent injuries.

## **What are some ways to fit exercise into my daily schedule?**

There are lots of ways to raise your heart rate during your regular day. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk during a coffee break or lunch. Walk to work or park at the end of the parking lot so you have to walk further. Walk more briskly. Do housework at a quicker pace and more often (like vacuuming every day). Rake leaves, push the lawn mower or do other yard work.

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